

A
GOOD EXPEDIENT
FOR
INNOCENCE and PEACE,
BEING
An Essay Concerning
THE
Great usefulness and Advantage
OF
LAYING ASIDE
PUBLICK OATHS.



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GOOD EXPEDIENT

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INNOGENCE and PACE

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PUBLICK OATHS

1888

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IT is agreed to on all hands, that nothing does so much contribute to the ruine of Kingdoms & Societies, as the abounding of vice and immoralitie: Wickedness, where it becomes outrageous, challenges heaven to vindicate its own authoritie, and arms God for vengeance against a people: and the more spreading and universall it grows, the greater mass of wrath is thence treasur'd up, & destruction thereby the more infallibly ascertain'd. And then what overflowing inundations of fury, may justly be apprehended, beyond whatever this poor land has hitherto smarted by, from those monstrous heights of Gigantick vice, which has swell'd to degrees, that scarcely our very fears could have probably suggested? Witness all sorts of the most Licentious villanies, that refuse to know any bounds or restraints! we have now beheld *Atheism* so bold, that it no more skulks in corners; but outfaces the Sun and Men: We have lived to see Religion openly scoff'd down, and expos'd as the only besitting qualitie of the more flegmatick melancholy kind of People; Swearing and Drunkenness the Genteel fashionable form of behaviour: lust and whoredome the ordinarie topicks of discourse: Adulterie and viler uncleanness brought to be the Mode: Perfidie and Murther authoriz'd: finally, a contempt of all that's sacred and serious; and then it can be no wonder if we shall find iniquitie become our ruine.

And now that matters are brought to so dreadfull, so desperate an Issue, the land groaning under such an intolerable load of sins and calamities; what man is so hard hearted, so regardless of God, so unconcerned for the publick good of his Native Country, so void of all sense of his own, & his neighbours danger, danger in their highest & dearest Concerns; as will not contribute the utmost that in him lies, to put the most effectual stop to these common national sins, that otherwise will make the kindlings of the divine anger break out and consume all?

Did we Live in an age that shewed any tolerable measure of respect to the divine Laws, it might be hop'd, that whatever were made appear to be sinfull, should instantly be abandon'd; whatever were understood to be a Crime, would be accordingly avoided; and then the plain detecting a vice, would go a great way towards it's cure: but so far is it otherwise that most men, seem so utterly to have divested themselves of all fear of God, that they can defy their own convictions, charge through all kinds of sins, and own no further difference of *Good and Evil*, than their present worldly interests, or viler appetites suggest or prompt them to; and then what success can be promised from any attempt for our Cure?

But yet no Wickedness, how general soever, ought to supersede endeavours of a Recoverie; but the more prevalent and universal, vice growes, the more strenuous labours should be employed to controul it.

It is, sure, one of the best Offices a Person can undertake, in days of general backsliding, to draw the notorious reigning sins of the land in their just colours, to paint them in their true and horrid shapes, that men by beholding the natural *ugliness* and deformities of them, and by considering what they will end in, may be cautioned to forsake them, and so may flee from the wrath to come.

It were a vast work to attacque all; I shall single out one of the first magnitude, *viz*: the swearing inconsistent Oaths; which I presume, will by all be confess'd to be an *Impietie* of the greatest size, and to have a most powerful Energie in drawing on all those Woes and Calamities, we have been so deeplie plung'd into.

It will be readilie acknowledg'd, by all the wrangling Factions amongst us, that the Land has been involved in no less, than the horrid guilt of Perjurie; as indeed, where there has been so much swearing & counterswearing, how could it possiblie escape? Every new turn of affairs, must be accompanied with new model'd *Oaths*, adapted to the Circumstances of the prevailing Party, right or wrong; & then all must *to Pot*, who cannot swear & sign *these*, how flatly soever contradictory to *those* others that preceeded them; without the least regard pay'd to the former Obligations, though as solemn as any later that can be substituted in their room. I need not give Instances; the *Solemn League*, and *Declaration*, the *Tender*, the *Test*, &c. are too notorious
pregnant

pregnant instances to be denied: And the Crime, upon an ordinary examination of the terms, thence too apparent; than which there can be no higher Contempt, put upon the tremendous *Majesty* of GOD; nor any wickedness, which raises a louder cry at the Tribunal of Heaven for vengeance: and if Men can once be habituated to, and harden themselves in such courses, there is an end of all that's holy and heavenly, tender and apprehensive in human Nature; and all those storms and tempests of the divine indignation to be expected, which result from the Justice of an affronted, sin-revenging GOD.

Now, can there be any man so devoted to all that's execrable and accurs'd, such a lover of mischief, as that he would not heartily wish for a proper Remedy of so great an Evil: And here it may be proposed to consideration, what might be the most expedient Mean, to prevent such gross commissions in this Particular, as, if not obviated, must needs overwhelm and confound all, sink and ruin the Nation, and our selves? And whether, considering that Faith has so sensibly failed from among Men, it were not at present adviseable, for saving the Land from farther heights of Sin, and so to ward off the most formidable judgements, that otherwise threaten us; whether, I say, considering these things, it were not adviseable, to forbear the imposing of those customary Obligations, and to dispense with all publick Oaths, the swearing of which, in the present depravation of mens manners, can afford no possible securitie to the Publick; but only tend to inflame our Guilts, and more highly to incense God to pour out his fiercest Anger upon us.

It cannot indeed be denied, but that the custom of binding Subjects, by Oaths of *Allegiance*, to the *Supreme Powers*, hath been very universal; and spread it self far and nigh all the World over: It was ever judged reasonable to provide the most effectually for the common safety, and to guard most carefully against all disturbance of the Publick Peace and Tranquillity; and to make sure of this, nothing was so promising, as to put Men under the most Sacred Ties of restraint; that having invoked GOD *Judge* and *Avenger*, they might be kept back from whatever tended to embroil or confound affairs; that however any bold *Incendiaries* might hope for Impunity from humane Power, they might still be awed by the unconquerable dread of the *Omnipotent Justice*, that would un-
void.

voidably pursue the violation of their Holy Vowes : but then all this was to suppose, that Men made Conscience of performing what they had undertaken ; and were heartily resolved, with an unshaken constancie, firmly on all hazards, to stand by what they had so Solemnly engag'd to, as they should answer to GOD on the contrary : But now that there has such degeneracie and Corruption of Manners sprung up amongst us, and there seem to be no longer any impressions of Religion or Morality left on the minds of Men, but they can as easily burst asunder all the most Sacred Bonds of Allegiance, as if they were only threds of Cob-web ; no other fruit of their *Oaths* being discernable, but the horrid Guilt of breaking them ; while matters are brought to this pass, it ought sadly to be laid to Heart, whether out of pure respect to the Honour of GOD, and Holy Reverence to his Name, it be not the far safer Course, to lay aside the imposing, or Swearing of those Oaths, which do so notoriously tend to the farther Debauching of Mens Minds, and tearing their Consciences ? And to incline Men to favour this *Overture*, these few obvious Considerations may be briefly insisted on.

II. That no Party sooner gets the Ascendant over their Opponents, but their utmost Invention is stretched, all art employed to secure themselves in the Possession of what, it may be, only their force and violence has wrested ; and quite to suppress and bear down all that cannot justify their proceedings, and applaud (like enough) the groundless fictions of their distempered Brains ; and then *Oaths* must be devised with particular respect to their own, And their adversaries Tenents ; that such as have different sentiments of matters from them, may be brought either to disclaim what they have formerly professed to believe, or exposed to all the hardships and Calamities, that their *persecuting insulting Foes* have the power to inflict upon them. And these Obligations being countenanced by the Authority in being, at the time, when they are imposed, are cryed up by all the Abettors thereof, as Religious and necessary ; and all that refuse them, branded with the most Odious Names their Spite can load them with : And though nothing be less intended than the wellfare of the Community, or the Advancement of Religion ; yea, let Religion suffer the most mortal wounds their Artifices

tifices can give her, and the strengthening the faction be the only aim of their Contrivances; yea, O profane mockerie! GOD is entitled to the *faction* ; their fiery Violence is Christned *Zeal* ; and the standing or falling of Religion, must streight be made to depend on the interest they have espoused, and he that comes short of their bitter fury, is luke-warm; and all non-compliance is downright enmity to the *Gospel* : And then their way being necessary, nothing less can suffice, than the Interposing the most Solemn *Oaths* to support and perpetuate the Cause: but when the fulsome hypocrisy becomes abominable; and GOD for the transgressions of a Land, or in pity of the miseries of it, sends another Change, no sooner is the Scene shifted, but as the sure Concomitant of that, there Succeeds a new Revolution of *Oaths* ; and *These* again framed in the plainest Contradictorie Terms to *those* that went before: so, as to be sure, the *former* shall be openly abjured by the *latter* : And when the oppressed get from under the Rod of their Persecutors, they reckon the severest Treatment they can repay, but a just *Retaliation* : their resentments grow more stubborn, than can be easily appeased; and the heap of Injuries they have sustained, is too great for all their Charitie to Pardon, Thus as the Scales Turn, there's nothing but swearing backward and forward; and what we are now required to abjure, shall by the next Change of affairs, be imposed as indispensable necessary Duty. Now, I would desire any sober Man in GOD's name, to tell me, whether he thinks there can be a more dreadful Sin, than such a desultorious playing with *Oaths* ? What greater contempt can possible be put upon the glorious Majesty of GOD? What can more expose the Gravity and Wisdom, the Piety and Probity of the Nation? Or prepare sader plagues and a more certain intolerable Ruin? Sure I am, such as have the power in their hands to prevent so great an Evil, are concerned to lay it sadly to heart: for they that can hinder a Sin, and do it not, are highly accountable to GOD for it. And in this Respect it may seem reasonable to dispense with the *Oaths* . Especially if we farther,

II. Consider, what small Reckoning men have now unhappily learned to make of them: Publick Bonds for Money, and *Publick Oaths* , are reputed mere matters of form, that lay no obligation upon

upon the Conscience; and there are but a few that judge themselves any longer bound by them, than a fair occasion offers of emancipating them: Whatever the importance of their most *Solemn Promises* have been, they make no difficulty, on the first temptation, of engaging themselves to the other side of the contradiction. A *Guilt*, this, of such an atrocious nature, as must needs utterly lay waste the Conscience, and render it insensible and callous. It's not the opinions we take up, that can alter the nature of our Duty: the hainousness of *Perjury* is nothing abated by the stubborn confidence of our *Fancies*: The Divine Sanctions cannot be altered by any Power of our *Imaginations*: All our belief can have no efficacie towards the making that *Venial*, which GOD has made *Damning*. Sin will retain its native *Venom*, its own proper *Deadly Nature*, whatever sleight perfunctorie notions we force our selves to entertain concerning it. Would Men therefore summon up their serious attention, and, in GOD's Fear, deliberately weigh what is to be done; it's fairly supposeable they would utterly abolish a *practice*, whereby, because of Mens wild mistaken notions, they do unwarily deceive their own *Souls*, and most palpable provoke and dishonour that all-powerful and just Judge, to whom Vengeance doth belong. It's proper here to remember that the Swearing *pro* and *con* in the contests betwixt the Houses of *York* and *Lancaster* was so hainous a Transgression, as could, it seems, be expiated by no less Sacrifice, than of a hundred Thousand Lives; for no fewer were slain in that quarrel.

III. Let it be considered that these *Oaths* are a plain force & violence to most even of those that Swear them: Some Men for Worldly advantage are tempted to take them, though with reluctant Consciences. A great many stand condemned by the Sentence of their own Hearts, in the very moment of the *Solemnity*. *Interest* is the great *Deity* that has by far the most Votaries; there's nothing so hazardous, which the prospect of Gain will not make men adventure on; there are but few such Virtuous *Souls* as are able to resist a Temptation of getting. For a piece of Money, one will struggle hard with, and worst his own Conscience, and defie present Convictions, in the very instant of his grossest commissions: And then it's Obvious that the annexing *Oaths* to lucrative Places,

is one of the most Dangerous Snares possible: Profit is a bait that will make any Hook be swallowed down. Now sure, hereby comes Evil, that all the benefit, that can be pretended on the other side, can never preponderate.

IV. Add, as an unavoidable consequent of this, the unspeakable Damage that accrues to the Publick, by the frequent *Revolutions* and interfering of *Oaths*: for, by this means, the best & most useful Men are often kept back from places of Trust, and such thrust in, as are the Plague and reproach of Mankind: he that regards GOD and himself, fears an *Oath*; and will not swear any thing, but what he is fully satisfied does plainly consist with his strict duty, and all the former *Obligations*, that have at any time pass'd upon him: thence he is barr'd those Stations wherein he might be a Blessing to his Country. Whereas on the other hand the Vicious Man, that by his Leud Conversation has numm'd and stifled his Conscience, and blotted out all sense of *Virtue* in his Soul, will bogle at nothing; but at all rates will climb up to these Posts of Advantage or Authority, that his *Covetousness* or *Ambition* beckon him to: Let him have *Money* and *Honour*, and he shall never enquire on what *Terms* he comes by them! And what's to be expected from the advancing such to Rule and Dignity? Will they respect *Equity*, or faithfully administer *Justice*? Will they dispense the Law with Candor, and equally maintain Truth between Man and Man? Nay, will they not notoriously pervert Judgement, and have their Eyes Blinded with Bribes? And make the saddest jumble and medley of affairs, from which nothing but general Confusion and Mischief shall ensue? For when the wicked bear Rule, the City mourneth; and the most dreadful Comets do not so certainly preface future Calamities, as the preferring Vicious men to places of Eminence and Government. And yet this mischief is caus'd by nothing more visibly, than the frequent varying the *Terms* of getting into *Employment*, which is a *Grievance* that calls Loudly for *Redress*.

V. Another Mischief of vast Consideration, that the imposing of *Oaths* effects, is, that they do exceedingly tend to the farther Widening of these woeful *Differences*, already, far too Notorious, when the Prejudices of discording Parties are hightned by the in-

intervention of an *Oath*; what hope is there left remaining of the possibility of a *Reconciliation*? this fixes a *μεγα χάσμα*, an unpassable Gulf betwixt them: and the breaches that might have been Cemented before, are hereby rendered irreparable. This is a compendious way to shut the door against all Peace, and to make our wranglings and Contentions endless: Even the more moderate and cooler Tempers, are hereby inflamed to the height of Bigotrie; and their Alienations wax so inveterate, that they can no longer listen to any proposals of a Pacification: So that it may with great probability be averr'd, that it's the bandying of Oaths to and fro, to which we owe all the bitter contests that have been managed with such Implacable Hatred; it may confidently be affirmed they had, at least, otherways never been so *fiere*. For, with whatever indifference persons may respect the opposite Parties, ere they be engag'd, yet when once they are drawn in, by a *Solemn stipulation*, the Support of the *Faction* is made the Object of their Zeal; and it stands them on their Reputation, to assert the necessity, just or unjust, of what they are *Sworn* to Maintain. And then, at all rates, down with their adversaries; and nothing short of Slaughter and destruction is breath'd out against all that shall dare to question the certainty of the Articles they have embrac'd; however doubtfull these propositions sometimes appear'd to themselves. And then what more seasonable Charity than to abstract the Foment from these accursed Divisions, by prohibiting those Oaths, that add Fewel to our Flames, and perpetuat our janglings? For so it might be hoped that in a little time, our unnatural Hearts would die out, & more of mutual forbearance and brotherly Kindness should spring up amongst us; our Animosities would gradually decay, when so great a cause of Distinction were removed; and Men by becoming more disinterested, would be more Impartial in their disquisitions for Truth; and prejudices being laid aside, they would with greater freedom of Spirit embrace that, wherever they found it. Thus, the mists of Errour might be dispell'd and vanish; and that pure and undefiled Religion, which is peaceable, full of Mercy and good Fruits, and without partiality, should shine in its true Glory; and our Zion might yet rise in her native Beauty and Splendour, become a peaceable and prosperous Habitation, the Joy and Praise of the whole Earth. Let me here but briefly mention, that these

these distinguishing *Oaths* do often make fatal Rebounds upon the Authors of them; *Amiclar* made *Hanibal* Swear at the Altar of his GOD's, that he should never make Peace with the *Romans*; & his Wars at last terminated in the final overthrow, the utter Excision of *Carthage*.

VI. The dispensing with Publick *Oaths* would goe a wondrous incredible length, towards the removing of those Commotions and disturbances that are of such pernicious Consequence to humane Societies, and to enstate us in the bleisful possession of the profoundest Peace: there can be no greater security to any Government, than its being easie and Gentle; this takes off the asperitie of Mens Minds, drives out whatever grudges, and cuts off all pretensions for fullen Murmurs and Complaints. It has a sweet Force, sufficient to conquer any Resistance, to reconcile all tractable generous Tempers, and carries a power in it able to *Charme* the most obstinate: When there is nothing left for men to Object, what Fears or Jealousies can be intertain'd of Plots or Conspiracies to undermine that Settlement, that every body enjoys such desired Contentment under? It creates mutual Confidence and Assurance in Rulers and People, & of all things does the most, to make the one quiet, and the other safe, whereas Rigorous harsh Impositions make the Spirits ferment, and beget Corrupt Humours, that do break out into dangerous eruptions in the Body Politick, and hurle the World into Confusions; The depraved infirm Flesh shrinks under what is afflictive, has aversions to the Cross, and can with difficulty be induc'd by all the Rhetorick of Heaven, either to take it up, or bear it: when 'tis loaded with what is grievous, it frets and storms, and is apt to stick at nothing that may disburden it. Ill Blood can hardly by any means be sweetned, and where Choler predomines, no Authority of any Laws Divine or Humane can repress it: Now all ground of such dangerous discontent is taken off, by forbearing whatever can be judged severe, by laying aside such discriminating *Tests* as Factious Seditious Men make Occasions of disturbing the World: and were every such thing dispensed with this mild usage could not but shame Men into good Nature: And a peaceable disposition, and a happy deliverance from all Tumults and molestations, must needs be the certain consequent of not leaving Men the least shadow of a Foundation to quarrel on.

Were these few things seriously pondered, and sincere Honest Designs of advancing Religion and Virtue entertained in the breasts of Men, it might, with some Confidence, be hoped, that they would chearfully concur to remove what is attended with such manifest *Inconveniencies*, and by the disuse of which, so many signal Advantages should be obtained. What rank of Men is he to be numbered in, who will needs pertinaciously adhere to what he plainly observes to be the Source and Origin of so many woeful Guilts and Calamities? Does he fear GOD, or love Virtue who would not banish away, what, he must needs know, GOD does hate, and will punish? And who is he, who under a live sense of the Divine Justice & Holiness, dares think of Patronizing the custome of Swearing contrary *Oaths*, whereby the Omnipotent GOD is most grievously offended, and which ripens for the most frightful destruction, and for which GOD's Judgements are already so visibly abroad in the Earth? Has he any Zeal for the honour of GOD, who is not concerned for the profane contempt cast upon his Holy Name? Does he wish the thriving and prosperity of the Publick, that would not prevent the occasion of a Sin, that must needs undo and ruine it? Would to GOD, I were able to lay any thing on this Head, that might awake and call up Mens Thoughts, rouse their Attentions, and set them in earnest a thinking as under the all-seeing Eye of GOD, whether what has been said deserves any Regard from them! and what every ones, bound duty may require from him, in his several Station and Capacity! Would Men be so just to their Maker, so kind to themselves, as to be perswaded to compare the Advantages and disadvantages of either side; and to chuse the Good, and refuse the Evil; One might promise soon to hear it become the general Cry, the common Supplication *No more SWEARING! No more PUBLICK OATHS*, that by their interfering must needs be of all things on Earth the most full of Terror, the most full of Guilt and Danger!

But whatever the advantages the complying with the design of this attempt might be attended with, It is not to be doubted, but it will meet with fierce enough opposition (as indeed all healing Overtures have Ordinarily the Fate to be treated with the bitterest Spite and Contradiction) and upon various accounts may have black enough Colours laid upon it. Some

Some will be Enemies to it from the apprehension of the private loss and Damage that themselves in particular might sustain, by the succeeding of any such Proposal: this might possibly, they'll think, make Changes; and so, they who are in the present enjoyment of any gainful Posts might be disseiz'd; and others made to reap the Profits: and therefore such, no doubt, will *furiously* Malign and Resist: but if they be virtuous Persons, and demean themselves as Men of merit and sufficiencie for the Trust they enjoy, there's no reason for them, to set themselves, on this account, against what might be of good use to the Community; for nothing could more secure men of worth and Merit: But if they be of another Stamp, it were a general Blessing to have them removed; and one of the greatest benefits such an *Alteration* should effect, would be the turning out Vicious, insufficient & Scandalous Men; and what harm could come by their Fall? But, whatever endeavours any Persons, on such accounts, may use, to oppose a publick Good; it ought not to be neglected to gratify the Ambition or Covetousness of Private Men: For Woe to that self seeking that wishes to thrive upon the Publick Ruin.

But others will be ready vehemently to exclaim against any such dispensation, as being injurious to the Supreme Power; it being *highly* reasonable that all *fullest Assurance* should be taken, of the Subject for the preservation and security of the Government: and how shall any Sovereign expect fidelity, where it is not faithfully promised? This is, I confess, the most material Plea that can be opposed to what is now reasoned for; And truly if the safety of the Government could be sufficiently provided for, and obtain any sure warrantice from Mens Vowing Fealitie, it might appear a Crime to lift a lip against, or return any Answer to this Objection; it being most just that they should in the Name of G O D engage; not only, not to do them harm themselves, but take all possible care, and use their utmost, most faithful endeavours, that none should be done them by others: but then what they so undertake, they ought to adhere to, to their lives end. But Alas! when nothing is effectuat by any such Means; when dayly experience convinceth us, that all this produces nothing but the blackest, most dire *Guilt*, what ground in the World is there, to require

quire or impose *Oaths*, that men make no Conscience of observing? And which only tend to profane the Dreadful Name of GOD, to contemn and provoke the Divine Majesty, & to treasure up a greater stock of Wrath against the Land? for in a few words it may be made plain to a demonstration, that in the present Corruption of the World, Publick *Oaths* are absolutely of no Benefit, or Use imaginable. For he whose principles or Interest bind him, to a Partie or Establishment, will be stedfast thereto without the intervention of an *Oath*: But if a Man swears against his Principles and his Interest, no such Tie will bind him, ten thousand such *Oaths* shall never hold him fast, nor does he think himself obliged to continue firm to them; But on the contrary the grating Sense of what he judges himself to have trespassed in, will powerfully draw and move him to make the best Reparation he is able, for the wrong step he has taken; whence it evidently appears wholly vain, to expect any Security to the publick, by the interposition of *Oaths*.

But the most implacable Enmities will arise, from those who are of that envious Temper, as to grudge the least ease to tender Consciences. This is true, is of so black a dye and speaks such a hellish disposition, as will find few or none that will make open profession of it: for this were bare faced lie to vouch themselves cruel persecutors. But yet it is shrewdly to be suspected, There are not wanting, Men of that malevolent nature, as would find a torment in any favour granted to those whom they bear no kindness to; and take a Particular Complacencie in what's re may afflict or ensnare them; than which there can be no Qualitie more contrary to the Spirit of Christianity: for this is to please ones self with that which is the satisfaction of the devils, who are delighted with the miseries and ruines of men: and the nearest resemblance, and most lively portraiture of a Devil is an invidious Nature, that wishes or contrives what is hurtfull and prejudicial to another. And then wherever any thing of this spirit is discernable (as alas! a very Superficial Scrutiny may too easily discover it) all that have learned Christ, must own themselves bound to controul it.

I cannot foresee any thing farther, worth noticing, that this overture can be charged with; and therefore would men without bias, apply

apply themselves to spend some serious thoughts about it, its hardly
 to be supposed it could meet with any resistance from sober, pious,
 & well-disposed persons. For is there not a God, and is he not the aven-
 ger of sin? & can any man who believes his Being, reckon it indiffe-
 rent, whither his great and dreadful name, be revered or blasphem-
 ed? and does not the religious observance or Profane violation of
 our promissory Oaths amount to all this? For, let any Impartial man
 narrowly Examine the Importance of those diversified Oaths that
 have been imposed, and let him try his art of reconciling the terms
 if he can: And by the time that he has a while employed his thoughts,
 as in Gods presence, about them, he may come to con-
 ceive a difference betwixt him that sweareth, and him that fear-
 eth an Oath. The very Heathen had always the greatest tender-
 ness and regard for their Oaths (whereof abundant instances might
 be given) and shall they seem to lose their sacredness amongst those
 who are called Christians? God forbid! and yet what Esteem can
 he be thought to hold them in, who swears incomparable inconsis-
 tent things; what can it be to take the name of the Lord in vain, if
 this be not it; And is it a frightfull Impietie first to take them,
 and then to break them? and what must it needs be to require, to urge
 and force them? This is what may exact Mens most Attentive
 Consideration: Every one who has a due care of his soul
 will be studious to exoner himself in this: Men will find it
 Dreadfull appearing before Christs tribunal to answer not only
 for their own personal sins, but for the guilts of others which they
 have caused. And if there was any specifick kind of sin which I did
 more especially dread the danger of, that I were to put up my most
 earnest suit to God to be kept free from, as being of the most atro-
 cious provoking nature; I think I should not much mistake in my
 condescensions; if my most heartie prayer when I shall at last stand
 before the dread Judgement Seat of Christ, were, *O God I pray more
 Particularly that I never be found guiltie of the most horrid sin of
 perjury.* Think what the Character of a Perjured Person is in the
 common verdict of mankind, and even in the estimat of our own Laws!
 and is the sin so black and scandalous when it is personal! and is it
 less so, when 'tis National? No! certainly it is not, for it is such a most
 formidable piece of wickedness, such a horrid crime, a *Piaculum*, as
 may well be Judged to forfeit the divine protection; and leave a
 People

People and Nation, guilty of it, open to all the Rage and Malice of the Devil, to be hurried on by him at his pleasure from sin to sin, till they fill up the measure of their Iniquity and the Wrath of God come upon them to the uttermost: and therefore to this purpose, most applicable is the Admonition of St. James, wherewith I conclude: *But above all things, my brethren, swear not.*

FINIS.
